



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Statement concerning Censure

February 28, 2019

Ladies and Gentleman of the House:

While the proceedings of this evening are necessary in the eyes of some, it is most unfortunate that we are even here.

The end of a regular 17 hour work day concluded by accepting a ride from a committee dinner to a local cigar smoking lounge. A place I do not frequent, as I am not a smoker but choose freely to visit for some evening conversation and wrap-up of the day with other Members of this body.

It is apparent, that someone in attendance heard or thought they over- heard an inappropriate word and attributed it to me. In- lieu of reporting the incident in accordance with our newly adopted harassment policy, that unknown individual choose to contact a member of the media for a purpose only known to them..... thus igniting an expected fire storm response.

With the lack of independent verification and counsel of trusted friends, I saw no other appropriate action then to take responsibility for the said action. Weeks passed and rumors spread. I was encouraged to meet with members of the Legislative Black Caucus to explain and put the matter to rest.

I would like to thank Delegate Darryl Barnes (D) Prince George's County, President of the Legislative Black Caucus (LBC) and its leadership team for allowing me time to meet this past Monday evening. It was a productive exchange. The LBC asked me to make a formal apology, seek diversity training and relinquish my leadership position. I did so immediately.

Thereafter, I met with Speaker Busch and he concurred with this recommended form of appropriate discipline. He issued a statement acknowledging my mistake and set forth

a path of eventual redemption. I accepted my punishment and began the road to reconciliation. I am grateful to the Speaker for his leadership and understanding.

Later that day, I was also asked by the LBC to make a formal in person apology to the entire Democratic Caucus, which I did as well as a written apology to all Members of the Maryland General Assembly, people of Maryland and anyone I may have offended.

Now here we are this evening; you my colleagues are considering what the appropriate sanction is for alleged use of a despicable word. While ever so vial and hurtful, a word. Not an action, behavior or course of conduct.

Words matter, they can inflict pain. In this case and this word represents the most deployable and for that I accept your action. I too denounce the use of this word. It is not in my vocabulary, and it does not represent my belief system, my life's work or what's in my heart.

This week, In the midst of a media frenzy, some have expressed concern over my voting record as it pertains to the minority community in Harford County and the State of Maryland. I welcome such an examination as it will reveal more about the strength of my character and dedication to fairness.

Some have expressed concern over my moral compass. I suggest that you look to my life of public service and record of inclusion. Your answers will be found there.

Some members of this body have expressed concern about my home life and my upbringing. I suggest that you get to know my friends, family and the people I grew up with. They are welcoming to all races, colors and creeds. I come from and represent a small, multi-racial town where we love and support each other.

Some have expressed concern about my education and proffered theories that as a white woman from Harford County I couldn't possibility understand diversity and the pain of oppression. If that is the case... to them I say, teach me.

I recognize that some have rushed to judgment without information and freely jumped on the bandwagon of condemnation, likely for political expediency. I have no ill will towards them but understand the desperation of their situation.

To those who have called for my resignation, I say quitting is easy but not the road to redemption. Quitting this body would be the easy way out. I could walk out of this Chamber back into my private life lifted by the burden of society's woes, but that is not the right thing to do.

Staying and accepting responsibility is the hard work. Rolling up your sleeves and attacking political and racial divisiveness that is tearing at the fiber of our nation and our State is the hard work. I am up for the challenge.

Healing begins tomorrow. I am immediately reorganizing my office and looking to hire an individual that will help me reach out to diverse communities in my County so that we may lead the way for understanding and opportunity. We will be a model for Maryland.

I will focus the rest of this Session on my bills that provide funding for an extension of Harford Community College in Edgewood. Providing educational opportunities on the Route 40 corridor to people in need with limited transportation will change lives. My other priority is funding for phase II of development of our Historic Colored School complex in Havre de Grace. (<https://www.hdgcoloredschool.net/>). I have been involved in this project for many years, and received state funding in the last legislative session. Together with the Board of Directors we will make this historic site the epi-center of multi-cultural education, opportunity and economic development.

After session I plan to accept the Prince Georges County Executive's invitation to visit her County and begin the healing process with her and the people of that great county. She is truly a role model that I want to get to know. Hopefully members of the Prince George's County Delegation will join me so we can exchange ideas and learn more about what we have in common versus what divides us.

Lastly, but most importantly, I am grateful for everyone in Harford County that has reached out to me to offer input, guidance, and encouraged me to stay here to take on this enormous challenge. With their help, together we will mend our woes and build a stronger foundation for our community. That is our tradition and that is our spirit.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this body. May God bless each one of you. It is to him I give honor and ask for his mercy and final judgment.